

# Forty-Three Years of Meditation

There are many types of meditation consequently one is free to take their pick. I had picked mindful meditation after first learning transcendental meditation free of charge, forty-three years ago. Mindful meditation simply states that one should put their attention on the insides of themselves. One should be aware of one's thought patterns.

Further that one should invite the moment in. One should try and stay in the present moment without drifting into thoughts about the past or future. Zen had suggested that we should "be without thinking." That had proven traditionally too challenging for most. Unrealistic because one had to think about many different things daily. It had proven more practical for one to consciously and gradually do less bad thinking and more good thinking. Bad thinking had sounded like monkey chatter. Good thinking had meant increased kindness towards others and self.

Perhaps one had also sprinkled in some albeit limited non-thinking, just being time. Human time (clockless) had proved different to me from the time that had displayed on our phones. In my humble opinion the more human time one carved out and authentically experienced, especially surrounded in nature, the better.

I had often mused, “What is the mind?” The mind had dished up for us that which we had taken as reality. The mind had raced ahead. The mind had done more and more thinking and had pushed one’s life into a more frantic pace. The mind had ceased thinking but only when it could think no longer. The mind had only stopped thinking when the mind had become exhausted.

When I was a little kid, I had a black and white spotted dog, an English Setter aptly named Pepper. When I came home from school, I’d let her out to play and from the porch watch her run around and around the outside of our house. No commands would stop her. Treats would not stop her. She ran until she had dropped. I had learned how to safely jump on her from the porch and had wrestled her down to the ground. There I had held her tightly until she finally relented. I had feared her heart might explode if I had let her run frantically around and around in circles for too long.

For me, meditation had been just like jumping off that porch. But instead, I had intentionally wrestled my own mind down and held it firmly until it had relented. I had found it useful in meditation to recognize that the mind was not all knowing. It was simply being a mind. I had also reminded myself that the real authentic me had always been safe, something my mind had failed to mention.

I recognized that any sad feelings I experienced likely had originated in thoughts of the past. Anxious feelings had resulted from thoughts of the future. Instead, I had forced myself to be present. I just had to be.

As I aged, I had finally understood the nature of reality and had accepted my mind's contribution to my confusion. The notion that something or someone was separate from me was an illusion. The fact or reality is that everything is in fact connected. This had revealed another clear limitation of the mind's understanding. Further I realized that the mind had not been to the brain what the soul had been to the body. Instead, the mind had been to consciousness what the body had been to the soul.

Thanks to a regular meditation practice, I had finally put my mind in its place. I had become conscious of my mind. I had happily accepted my mind's limitations. It had after all just been a mind.

Consciousness had proven to be both narrow and wide. I had connected to something bigger than myself through my wider consciousness. This was yet still another reminder of my mind's limitations.

I had once again been reminded of the implications of time dilation, the Higgs field, and repulsive forces. While I had sat in meditation my body's atoms had pushed against the bench's atoms (repulsed atoms) which had made me feel like the bench I sat on was solid. The invisible

world did not exist in my mind. My mind had proven incapable of comprehending the full extent of the quantum field and its impact on the nature of our reality.

Science had proven that everything was waves of energy. Scientists have seen many waves of energy and yet still other waves of energy they could not see. Some waves of energy had been invisible like gravity waves for example, but scientists had known for a fact that gravity existed.

### **My Typical Twenty Minute Meditation Session**

I often spent time in the meditation gardens. Once I had settled into my favorite spot perched high on a cliff overlooking the ocean, I had shifted my full attention to my mind. I had mused, what's my mind up to, what is it doing now. Just being a mind of course.

I had shifted my attention to the feeling of my weight against the bench. I had found early in my meditation sessions that my mind had kept going to different places. I learned about a good strategy. I had simply turned each of my thoughts into a cloud and watched them pass overhead. It reminded me of the introduction to the Simpsons television show.

I had also said my mantra slowly several times. Then I focused on the sensations inside of my mouth. Later I focused on my breathing. I

listened to the waves and smelled the trees. Then I rolled up into my third eye. That had resulted in more stillness and eventually my mind had quieted considerably. The monkey chatter had subsided. Any thoughts that had appeared at any time during my meditation session had become clouds that I had watched as they passed overhead. Then I returned to not thinking. Just being.

In my forty-three years of having meditated, I had never assumed a particular pose or posture. I typically had kept my hands relaxed in my lap and I had closed my eyes with a straight spine. But I had meditated anywhere even while driving. I meditated on walks. Noise reduction ear buds had also proved useful in our noisy world. I had also done active meditations where I had relied on the muscle memory of all the sports and games movements that I had mastered over the years.

For three years and two months I spent time alone in silence and stillness in a Colorado forest. I had become aware of the natural flow of things. I had learned to be in the flow. Nature and the outdoors had proven to have been the most powerful ingredients in my meditation success. I also had the good fortune to have meditated in many different powerful places all around the world.

In my humble opinion one's doing well in their meditation practice if one's able to shift one's complete attention to the present moment, however briefly, whenever one had wanted to.

## **In the Beginning**

To a novice meditator I would describe meditation as letting one's mind take a bath. When one emerges from a 20-minute meditation it's like one's mind had emerged from a bath refreshed, maybe even temporarily rejuvenated. One's focus had typically improved.

In my humble opinion many meditators tend to be too hard on themselves. If nothing else, one benefits from just a quiet sit. A break in one's routine to simply sit still, and watch where one's mind goes. One does not need to beat themselves up over how one's doing their meditation, the mechanics. Forget about the right way or the wrong way to meditate. Be kind to yourself. Keep learning like you will live forever!

In my experience the motivation for one to practice meditation, especially in the beginning stages, had simply been stress reduction or stress management. Further I discovered the people that needed to meditate the most had the most difficulty with it. Consequently, in my experience many novice meditators had simply given up prematurely because of a lack of concrete results.

I had known it would take many years before I had let go of my ego, before my spirit had been awakened, and I had found inner peace. Fortunately, it had been explained to me clearly in my twenties that there had been no short cuts to finding one's inner peace.

For me it had been counter intuitive, but meditation had been about losing stuff not gaining stuff.

Shamans had pointed to meditation as the way for one to eventually see the different levels of non-ordinary reality. Scientists had proved that Gurus who had been consistent meditators had exhibited highly unusual amounts of empathy for others. Further, that thanks to plasticity they had re-wired their brains over time in a specific way.

Scientists had scanned the minds of a Gurus, and they discovered that two distinct parts of the Gurus mind had melded together and had become one. Connected initially by thought (empathy) these two parts of the brain had over time physically melded together and later acted as one. Gurus had built this bridge in their brains over time, and the rest of us had not. Gurus often say that the point of meditation is to become kind. Really kind all the time. Be well!